

■ Executive Summary

In response to California's rapidly aging population, Governor Gavin Newsom called for the development of a 10-year Master Plan for Aging. Issued in 2021, the state's Master Plan identified 5 broad goals and more than 20 action areas for the state to focus its implementation efforts. In the three years since releasing the Plan, the state has launched more than 200 implementing initiatives.

The Commission has long called for systemic change to address the needs of older Californians and applauds the Administration's foresight in producing such a comprehensive and ambitious plan for the state. This review sought to examine early implementation of the Master Plan and explore opportunities for improved oversight and accountability to ensure the state progresses towards its goals.

In this report, the Commission outlines nine recommendations that focus on strengthening implementation through the duration of the Master Plan effort.

Clarify Leadership Responsibilities and Functions in Statute

Implementing the Master Plan involves fulfilling a number of important functions, but despite the strength of individual leaders, the Master Plan's coordinated leadership model confuses accountability. To strengthen leadership through the duration of this effort and through inevitable changes in Administration, the Commission recommends codifying key leadership responsibilities and functions.

Enhance Legislative Oversight

There are limited opportunities for lawmakers to provide robust oversight of the Master Plan's implementation efforts. Realizing the bold vision

set forth in the Master Plan will require greater legislative oversight and ongoing engagement between lawmakers and the Administration throughout the duration of the Plan. The Commission recommends establishing a joint committee to oversee implementation through 2030.

Ensure Continued Stakeholder Engagement

The high level of stakeholder engagement involved in the development and ongoing implementation of the Master Plan is seen by many as one of its greatest successes. Yet the role and function of IMPACT Committee – which was created to formalize stakeholder input on implementation activities – is not enshrined in statute. To ensure continued and diverse stakeholder engagement and improve oversight and accountability, the Commission recommends codifying the membership, length of service, purpose and duties of the IMPACT Committee.

Update The Implementation Tracker to Enhance Usefulness, Transparency

The Department of Aging quickly developed the Master Plan Implementation Tracker as an accountability tool to monitor the hundreds of initiatives underway through the Master Plan. Yet, the Commission noted several shortcomings: It is difficult to learn what is underway, what has been accomplished, what has been merged or modified into a new initiative and what has stopped. It does not indicate why initiatives were closed, completed, or discontinued. It is not updated on a consistent basis. The Commission recommends several updates to improve transparency around the status of work and enhance the Tracker's usefulness for oversight.

Emphasize Initiatives That Directly Benefit Californians

Half of the currently active Master Plan initiatives contemplate study and research or communicate information rather than take action to deliver results to individual Californians. Given the major demographic changes taking place in the state, implementation should be conducted with an urgency not typical of government operations. The Commission recommends future initiatives emphasize delivering results. It also suggests that the Implementation Tracker be updated to include categories for each initiative's area of focus rather than producing separate reports containing these designations.

Establish a Roadmap for Implementation

The Master Plan established high-level targets for the state in each of its five goal areas, but these targets are too vague and do not adequately articulate the outcomes California hopes to ultimately achieve. Without a roadmap for implementation of the Master Plan, it will continue to be difficult for policymakers and stakeholders to track progress, assess needs and next steps, understand gaps in the state's capacity, and build support for the work. The Commission recommends developing a roadmap for implementation that includes short- and long-term aspirational goals and timeframes for completion. Going forward, new initiatives should include specific, measurable metrics that align with and drive progress toward these interim benchmarks.

Merge the State's Data Assets

In 2021 the Department of Aging launched the Data Dashboard for Aging as an online accountability tool to track progress on each of the Master Plan's five goals. The dashboard currently includes more than 80 indicators. The dashboard demonstrates

the Administration's intention to use data to inform planning and promote accountability but is ill suited for this purpose. California's data assets could be more strategically applied to the Master Plan goals and inform other future planning efforts. The Commission recommends the Governor and Legislature take further action to merge datasets across the Administration.

Track State Investments in Master Plan Initiatives

Today, the state has produced no overall budget for the Master Plan, nor has there been a comprehensive estimation of how much it would cost California to fully implement the Plan. Without an ongoing, systemic spending tracker, the process to account for Master Plan spending is time consuming, unnecessarily labor intensive, and falls short of providing real-time information. To enable the Administration and lawmakers to more easily and thoroughly assess investments and plan for future initiatives, the Commission recommends tracking state investments in Master Plan initiatives online and offers several data elements that should be included.